

PHOENIX IN ASHES

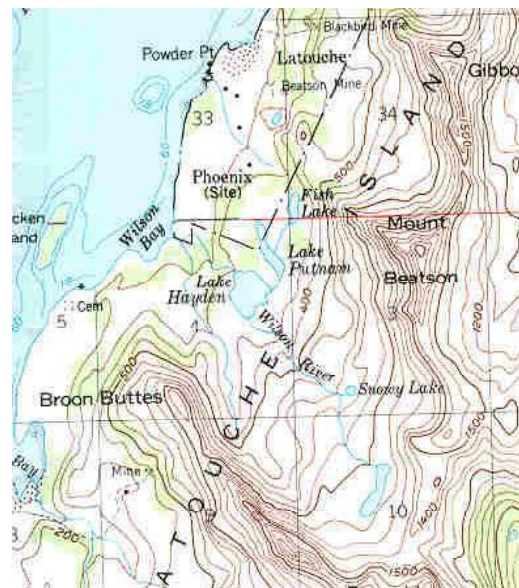
by
Mike Hankins

This is an interesting bit of data I found in researching the history of Latouche Island in Prince William Sound. This information indirectly relates to the J.W. Little - Latouche, Alaska token (Benice 2a). J.W. Little operated a saloon on Latouche Island (1908-1915) as he did in Cordova (1909-1911), Valdez (The Northern, 1909) and Ellamar (1901-1909).¹ The exact location of his bar on Latouche Island was actually a community named Phoenix.

Phoenix: locality, on NW coast of Latouche I., 22 miles SE of Chenega, Chugach Mts.; 60° 02' -33" N, 147° 54' 40" W; (map 63). *Var.* The Madhouse. Name of a mining camp and wharf reported in 1909 by Grant and Higgins (1910, pl. 12), USGS. The camp is now abandoned.²

The little town of Phoenix, Alaska consisted of a store, two saloons and an Italian restaurant. It was located approximately two miles from the larger Kennicott (Beatson Mine) town. This information can be found in Decema Kimball Andresen's book, "*Memories of Latouche.*" The other saloon in Phoenix that sat close by Little's place was Johnny Wild's Bucket of Blood Saloon. Kennicott miners from the area mines walked to Phoenix to sow their wild oats as did others via boat.

In July of 1913, there was a late night fire in the J.W. Little saloon that spread to the other businesses. The whole town basically burned to the ground. When mining employees in the Kennicott community were asked why they did not come help fight the fire, they answered that they had been told not to. Their bosses said the businesses in Phoenix were competition to the stores the mine owned.



(continued on page 12)

EDITORIAL

This month, we have a fun article from new subscriber, Mike Hankins of Anchorage. Nothing like a little on the ground research to spur on further research in the library!

And coming in the future, Mr. Hankins will be presenting details of Gustave Priesner's escapades. As long time readers will remember, we printed an article by W.E. Nickell in the September 1981 issue about a double murder in McCarthy. Gustave Priesner was the prime suspect. Mr. Nickell could only trace Priesner so far. Now, Mr. Hankins has found him in a POW camp in Utah in 1920. Perhaps we will learn what became of him after that.

Starting in this issue is *token Snapshots*. This series will feature a post card or photo and related token or tokens. These will be items that we cannot turn into an article, but think you would enjoy. For our next installment, can anyone provide a good scan of J.H. Chisel of Haines?

On page 10 (the facing page) is the advertisement for our book *Alaska & Yukon stocks and Bonds*. This is the culmination of 2 years work, with an additional 16 years thrown in for procrastination! Well, not really, but that is what it seems like. The book is \$35 postpaid via book rate, or add \$6 for priority mail if you are going to lay awake at night waiting for it to arrive.

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RIGOLET, LABRADOR



Late last summer the town of Rigolet, Labrador, Newfoundland issued a 2002 dated bimetallic \$3 municipal trade token to commemorate 25 years of their incorporation as a town, which took place in 1977.

Rigolet is situated on the coast of southeastern Labrador, about 100 miles northeast of Goose Bay. It has a population of 320, and is the smallest municipality to issue a 2002 dated municipal trade token.

The obverse side of the token, which is taken from the town's 25th anniversary logo. The scene on the reverse is taken from Rigolet's seal, which was adopted in 1977. The design shows two ptarmigans (grouse-like birds) in the center with a small plant between them. Ptarmigan are native to northern Canada. The birds remain in the north all year long, flying even further north in the summer. The token was designed by Tracy Brentnell of Rigolet.

The currency edition of the 2002 Rigolet \$3 token was struck on 32mm plain edge bimetallic blanks consisting of a 20mm cupro-nickel core surrounded by a 6mm ring of aluminum-bronze. The token is 3mm thick. The mintage was 450. These were also struck were 50 in bronze, 50 in nickel-silver and 50 gold plated.

These are available from Bonavita Ltd., Attn. Ray Desjardins, P.O. Box 11447, Station H, Nepean, Ontario, Canada K2H 7V1 at the following prices, postpaid: Bimetal - \$5.25; Bronze - \$14.50; Nickel-silver - \$14.50 and Gold plated - \$17.00.

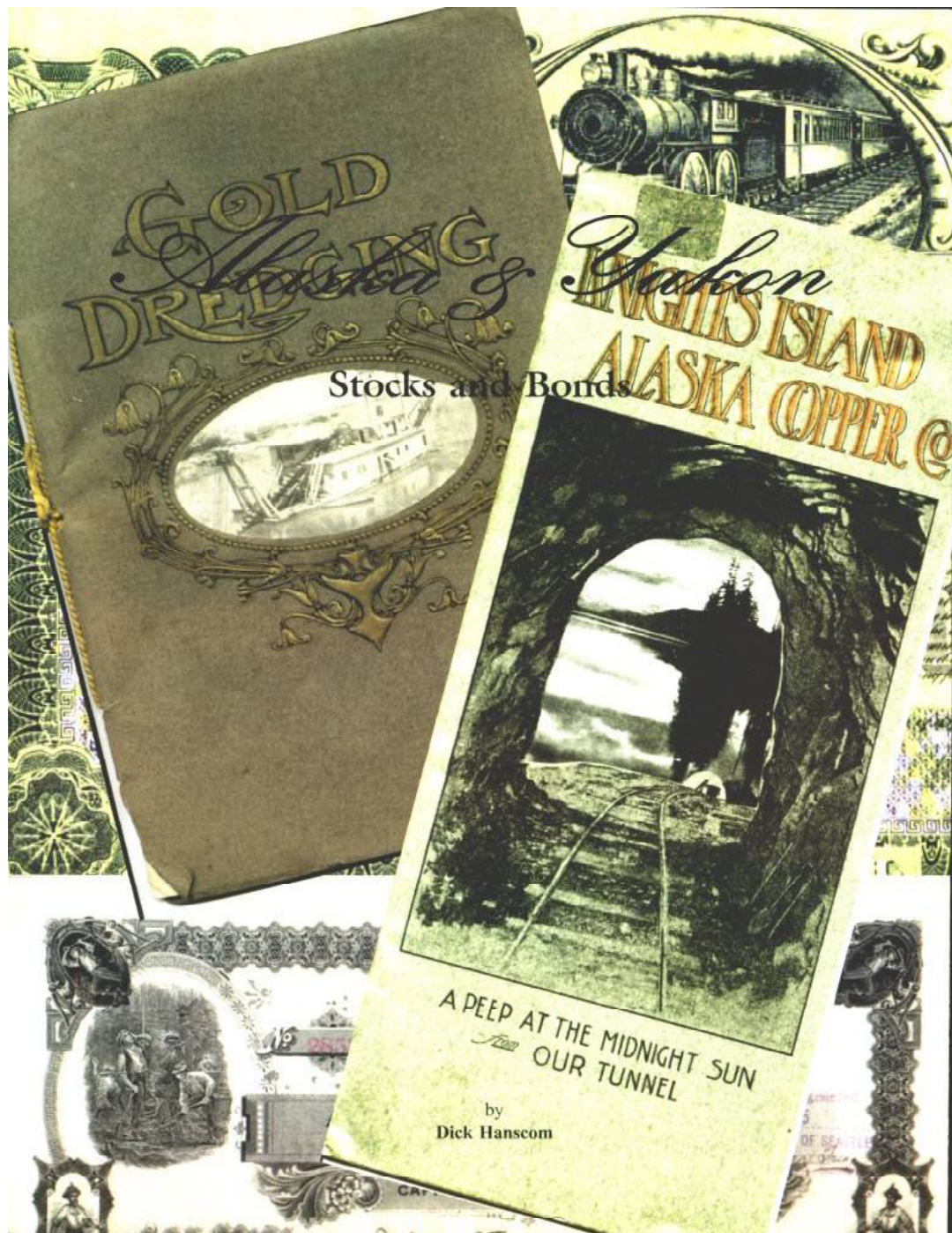
-Jerry Remick

REPORT FROM FUN

Word from FUN is that there was a hoard of about 50 Jake Nafsted tokens, mostly Unc a couple of years ago that has been slowly dispersed with price dropping to around \$30 now. I didn't get the name of the man who had the hoard but he said he got it several years ago and he has been running them in auctions and eBay. Most are now gone.

-Ron Benice

Alaska & Yukon Stocks and Bonds



We have just received the first samples of our new book *Alaska & Yukon Stocks and Bonds*. The full color cover is shown above. We have mentioned this in previous newsletters, but now we can show it to you! The book is 344 pages, softbound, 8½ x 11 inches. It has over 700 listings and over 500 photos. Your editor has been working on this since 1985, so it is a joy and a relief to see the final product. The price is \$35 postpaid via book rate, or add \$6 for priority mail. Our shipment should be arriving about February 5, post office willing! Order now, and we will send your book out as soon as they arrive.

Those who order will receive a copy of our new newsletter, *Alaska & Yukon Stocks and Bonds*. Those who do not wish to order the book, but would like a copy of the newsletter, please write and let us know.

TOKEN SNAPSHOTS



Port Alexander is located on the southeastern tip of Baranof Island, about five miles north of Cape Ommaney and 85 miles south of Sitka. It provides a safe harbor during the gales and storms that frequent Chatham Strait. It lies at approximately 56° 15' N Latitude, 133° 38' W Longitude (Sec. 07, T065S, R070E, Copper River Meridian). The community is located in the Petersburg Recording District. The area encompasses 3 sq. miles of land and 12 sq. miles of water. All but three of Port Alexander's tokens are illustrated above. These are for sale on page 12. Post card courtesy of Candy Waugaman.

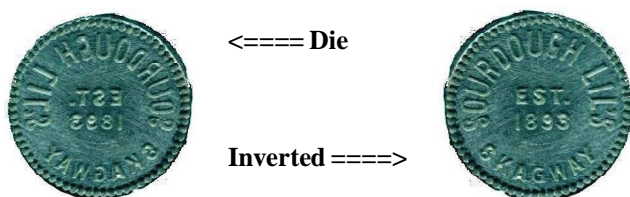
FOR THE RECORD



KODIAK: First National Bank of Anchorage, Kodiak Branch, Grand Opening, 1969, The Fishermen's Bank. "Silver dollar size." No other data reported (eBay).



WESTPORT, WA: Sourdough Lil's, Skagway, 1893. Die trial is 32 mm in diameter and appears to be struck on a copper planchet which is oversize for the token (eBay, no bids @ \$9.99). Interesting in that we have owned this die for many years, and we didn't do this!



BRASS ID TAG: Illustrated last month. From the Social Security Death Register: Eldridge PERDUE
Birth Date: 28 Sep 1905 **Death Date:** Oct 1991
Social Security Number: 574-01-4213 **State or Territory Where Number Was Issued:** Alaska
Death Residence Localities ZIP Code: 99707
Localities: Fairbanks, Fairbanks North Star, Alaska.

PORT ALEXANDER TOKENS

B-2a	Knute Dalsbo, 5 cts.,	25.00
B-2b	Knute Dalsbo, 25 cts.,	25.00
B-2c	K.D. (Knute Dalsbo) 25c in trade	25.00
B-3a	John Jacobsen, 12½¢ in trade	18.00
B-3b	John Jacobsen, 50¢ in trade	20.00
B-4a	T.J. Jacobsen, 50¢ in trade	18.00
B-4b	T.J. Jacobsen, \$1.00 in trade	25.00
B-5a	Pastime Card Room, 5¢ in trade	45.00

Send orders to ARC, P.O. Box 72832, Fairbanks, AK 99707. Include \$3 for postage for orders less than \$100.

LATOUCHE, CONT.

One of the buildings that was destroyed in Phoenix housed I.L. Kimball General Merchandise. "Eighty years have passed since the disastrous fire that burned our store and living quarters above it at Latouche Island in July 1913, but the whole scene is still as vivid to me as though it had happened yesterday. Mother coming into our bedroom, carrying a lamp, it was past midnight; telling us to get dressed and go down to the wharf in front of our building.

"It was dark and rain was falling. Sister Vera and I dressed as fast as we could and asked Mother who was dashing around stuffing things into pillowcases, what was going on.

"She told us that Little's Saloon, a hundred feet away, was burning and we might burn also. And we should try to help get the furs out as we went. Father had bought furs from the natives and we had a whole room full of pelts, a valuable collection....our town of Phoenix, which had been composed of two Saloons, one Italian Tamale House and our General Merchandise Store, had disappeared."³

The Kimball's moved their business to the new town of Anchorage the following year naming it Kimball's Dry Goods, recently closed after 88 years in business.

The Italian Tamale House is worthy of a further quote from Ms. Andresen's book: "Now, about the Tamale House. Sister and I were poking around behind it one day and we found a ditch half full of wings, heads and feathers of sea gulls. We told Mother about it and she cautioned us never to mention what we had found as the Italians were good customers of ours. They advertised chicken tamales, but we knew better."⁴

All that is left of Phoenix are some dock pilings barely visible on the beach, a name on old maps plus a handful of J.W. Little saloon tokens. Unlike the fabled bird that rose from the ashes, this is one Phoenix that never came back to life! But the ashes did yield a J.W. Little token, however, it was from Cordova!

¹: Benice, Ronald J. Alaska Tokens. Dates as reported.

²: Orth, Donald J., "Dictionary of Alaska Place Names", reprinted 1971 with minor revisions, USGPO.

³ and ⁴: Andresen, Decema Kimball, "Memories of Latouche."